Oaklands Estate Kindergarten

NUTRITION & FOOD POLICY

Children mainly learn eating habits from their parents and other people who care for them. These habits learnt during childhood tend to continue into adulthood.

Snack time at kindergarten is an important break in the session and provides a social environment for the children, where children are encouraged to develop healthy eating habits.

RATIONALE

Healthy eating helps young children to grow strong bodies, develop normally and reach their potential for learning. As young children cannot select and prepare food for themselves, the adults in the child’s life become responsible for making healthy food choices for them.

Based on the AUSTRALIAN DIETRY GUIDELINES for children and adolescents & DECD “Rite Bite Strategy”, it is emphasised that there is a need to:

- Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods.
- Eat plenty of breads and cereals, vegetables and fruits.
- Include dairy products such as milk, cheese and yogurt.
- Eat foods that are low in saturated fat.
- Balance food intake with physical activity.
- Eat only a moderate amount of sugars and foods containing added sugars.
- Choose low salt foods and use salt sparingly.
- Teach children to avoid foods that can cause adverse reactions (allergies) and not to share foods with others that may have adverse reactions.

NUTRITION POLICY AIMS

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Encourage and support children to develop healthy eating habits.
- Promote children’s understanding of how food affects health and the relationship between healthy eating and good health.
- Ensure that food provided at the kindergarten and foods bought from home will reflect the Australian Dietary Guidelines for children and adolescents and DECD “Rite Bite Strategy”.
- Support children who have health and cultural needs relating to special diet requirements.
- Raise awareness of good nutrition principles.

NUTRITION STRATEGIES

Snack Guidelines

- Children should bring either a piece of fruit, salad vegetables and/or a sandwich to eat at snack time. Sandwiches can contain any fillings except for peanut paste or nutella.*
Foods linked with a high risk of choking will be minimised. Hard fruits should be grated, mashed or cooked when they are provided for the younger children who have not yet learned to chew adequately.

**Lunch Guidelines**

- Children should bring a lunch containing some or all of the following: sandwich, fruit, salad vegetables, cheese, yogurt, dried/savoury biscuits. Sandwiches can contain any fillings except for those containing nut products (*Peanut paste and “nutella” contain nut products. Due to children with severe nut allergies, these products will not be permitted*). Cultural food norms should be acknowledged and accepted.
- Children will be encouraged to drink water with their lunch, however a fruit juice can be included with lunch food.
- Children who attend the lunch time program should have a separate container for their lunch and this is to be placed in the lunch basket.

**Drink Guidelines**

- Fresh drinking water is to be available for the children at all times.
- Children who wish to use their own drink container, should only bring water.
- Lunch boxes should have cold packs to retain freshness and avoid spoiling.

**Special Occasions and Birthday Guidelines**

It is acknowledged that on some occasions there is a desire to have foods which are outside the general policy of the centre, eg birthday cakes, special events etc. However, due to the increased incidence of allergies and adverse reactions previously unknown it is not permitted to bring foodstuffs to celebrate these occasions. It is suggested that some other avenue be utilised to mark the special occasions (stickers, etc.).

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Staff**

- Will encourage children to try new foods.
- Staff members or a parent engaged for lunch time care, will supervise children when eating.
- Will ensure that children drink sufficiently to avoid dehydration.
- Will ensure that children do not swap their foodstuffs for another’s child’s to avoid unknown adverse reactions.
- Learning about food and nutrition will be included into the curriculum, eg: growing vegetables, hands on cooking and tasting experiences, food awareness activities.
- Principles of good hygiene practice will be incorporated into daily routines to support this policy, eg hand washing.
- Food will not be used as a form of punishment or reward either by its provision or denial.
- Will allow children to eat at other times, if they are hungry.
Will provide parents with nutrition information via pamphlets, newsletters and the noticeboard, about the importance of good nutrition, healthy food choices and balanced, varied meals.

Will respect the food preferences of children.

Will act as role models in relation to their own food choices at the centre.

**Parents**

- Parents will be made aware of this policy upon enrolment of their child at the centre.
- Parents will be encouraged to support this nutrition policy and where difficulties arise in the provision of suitable foods, parents will be consulted. *Cakes, biscuits, chips, chocolates, lollies and fruit/muesli bars are not considered as suitable snacks.*
- Children who require specific foods because of dietary health needs or because of cultural/religious beliefs, then provision for this can be discussed with the director.

**OUTCOMES**

It is envisaged that adoption of this policy, and associated strategies, will result in normal physical development of the children and encourage the children to adopt healthy eating habits. It is further envisaged that no child will exhibit any allergic reaction whilst under care within the kindergarten.

This policy has been developed by the Governing Council Council in consultation with staff members of the centre.

This policy will be reviewed and evaluated regularly by both staff and the Governing Council and modified as required to ensure continued relevance for the Centre.

The Governing Council endorsed this policy on:

Date .................................

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Chairperson  Director